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United States
Department of
Agriculture

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Food and
Consumer
Service

Reply to
Attn. Of: SP 97-24

Mountain Plains
Region

Subject: Applicability of Appendix A to Menu Planning
Systems

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To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa,
(Child Nutrition Programs) Kansas, Missouri ED,
Montana OPI, Nebraska ED,
North Dakota, South
Dakota, Utah and Wyoming
ED

To provide local school food service professionals with additional flexibility to plan and prepare meals, the Food and Consumer Service has reevaluated the applicability of Appendix A of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program regulations to the established menu planning systems. This memorandum is intended to clarify that the restrictions in Appendix A apply only to food-based menu planning systems and not to systems using Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NuMenus) or Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (Assisted NuMenus).

NuMenus and Assisted NuMenus are not subject to the crediting specifications of Appendix A because the meal planner ascertains the nutrient and calorie levels automatically by computer analysis as part of the planning process and makes adjustments as necessary. By contrast, meal planners using a food-based menu planning system do not have the benefit of this analysis and cannot make ongoing adjustments. It is essential, therefore, that the meal patterns used in these systems follow the quantity requirements and the specifications in Appendix A.

The Department recommends to meal planners using NuMenus or Assisted NuMenus that vegetable protein products fortified to meet the requirements of Appendix A should not exceed the 30 percent level established under Appendix A for food based systems. Not only should meal planners avoid highly fortified foods as a general rule, but the levels of zinc and iron in fortified vegetable protein products meeting the standards of Appendix A far exceed the levels of these nutrients associated with a healthful diet.

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